

Physical Inspection Faqs

Protocol Related Questions

1. How do I become an inspector?

Applicants interested in becoming inspectors certified in the use of the Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspection protocol are required to submit to HUD a resume, completed Minimum Inspector Qualification Sheet and two passport-size photos. After review of the application package by PIH-REAC, qualified candidates must attend HUD's Inspector Certification Training Course, pass a sample test, then pass the certification test. For further information on the certification process and for access to the application form and a schedule of upcoming classes, go to the PIH-REAC web page at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/reac/products/pass/inspectors.cfm>.

2. What if all of the units for a MFH non-insured property are not subsidized by HUD?

Some Multifamily Housing properties do not have a HUD insured mortgage but continue to have HUD assisted Section 8 units (project-based). The property owner or agent will typically provide the inspector with this information. Only the Section 8 units for each building will be counted when establishing the building/unit profile and for sample selection. However, all other inspectable areas of the property must be inspected as per the protocol.

3. Are bedroom and bathroom doors supposed to have locks?

Locks are not required on doors, but if a lock was installed, it must be inspected to ensure that it functions as designed, with three exceptions: (1) Common area interior doors (not unit entry) may have missing locks; (2) 504 units may have missing locks; and (3) Public Housing bedroom doors may have missing or damaged locks. Inspectors must distinguish between locks, which are intended to prevent others from entering a room, and hardware that allows a door to latch (e.g. knob set or passageway set). Door hardware that is designed to latch and hold the door in place is not a lock and must function as designed.

4. Is the inspector supposed to verify the existence of all buildings in a property prior to the generation of the sample?

In order to ensure an accurate building and unit count, resulting in a statistically valid sample, the protocol requires the inspector to walk or drive the property site to visually verify the existence of all buildings with property personnel, prior to sample generation. The one exception is in the case of "single family scattered sites" where visual verification with property personnel is not required prior to sample generation. For these properties, the inspector may establish the building/unit profile utilizing data provided by the participant, owner or agent, generate the sample, and start the inspection. Building/unit profile information must be visually verified as the inspection progresses. The inspector is still responsible for visiting all sites to verify all buildings and units, including those not in the sample. For additional information see the Compilation Bulletin.

5. Does a REAC inspection include vacant units?

For all Multifamily Housing properties, vacant units that are included in the random sample will be inspected only at properties with 15 percent or more total vacant units. At such properties, sample vacant units will be inspected, recording deficiencies as per the UPCS software. At Multifamily Housing properties with less than a 15 percent vacancy, inspectors should not inspect vacant units. Inspectors should enter in the software all sample units including vacant units. As each sample vacant unit is visually verified, edit the unit to indicate that it is vacant and add the next alternate unit as per the protocol. Only vacant **sample** units must be visually verified.

Vacant units should not be inspected at public housing properties. Inspectors should enter in the software all sample units, including vacant units. As each sample vacant unit is visually verified, edit the unit to indicate that it is vacant and add the next alternate unit as per the protocol. Only vacant **sample** units must be visually verified.

6. What if I have attempted to inspect all alternate buildings and units as per the REAC protocol and cannot meet the generated sample?

While conducting the inspection, if a building is found to be uninspectable and there are no alternate buildings available, the inspector must call his/her Help Desk and secure a REAC TAC # before proceeding.

While conducting the inspection, if a sample unit is found to be uninspectable, substitute the first available alternate unit in the sample units' field for the sample unit. If there are no available alternate units within the same building, select the first available alternate unit in the next sample building of the same building type. If there are no available alternate units within the same building type, use the first available alternate unit of the next building type. If there are no other alternate units available, the inspector must call his/her Help Desk and secure a REAC TAC # before proceeding.

7. When it comes to fire extinguishers, does the REAC inspection follow the NFPA 10 or NFPA 101 code?

REAC's Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS) inspection is NOT a Code Inspection. Buildings must meet the requirements of local and state fire and safety codes. As a result, some buildings have fire extinguishers, while others do not. If fire extinguishers are not present and there is no evidence that they are supposed to be present (e.g. mounting brackets, fire cabinets, etc.), there is no UPCS deficiency.

8. When does an object constitute a Life Threatening Health and Safety hazard if it is placed in or in front of a window?

Items blocking a window or door only create a Blocked/Unusable (Emergency/Fire Exits) deficiency on the **third or lower floors**. All floor areas (e.g. room, unit or building) on these floors must have a minimum of two independent unobstructed exits. The deficiency applies as follows:

- If the only window in a floor area (e.g., room, unit, or building) is blocked by a window air conditioner, furniture, or any other obstruction, including an inoperable window sash and the area has only one exit door, the inspector must record a Blocked/Unusable deficiency.
- If a floor area has an obstructed window or door, but has at least one other unobstructed window and an exit door, there is **no** blocked egress. The inspector **should not** record a deficiency.

9. The property has already paid off its HUD mortgage and should not be inspected.

The inspector should Contact his/her Help Desk for guidance.

10. Property Representative will not let me do an inspection.

If the authorized representative does not allow the inspector to complete the inspection or is not at the property on the scheduled date, the inspector should call his/her Help Desk and inform them of the problem. The Help Desk will notify appropriate REAC personnel, who will work to resolve the problem. The inspector should remain on-site until the problem is resolved. If the problem cannot be resolved, REAC will provide a reference number to validate the inspection as unsuccessful.

11. I cannot contact a Property Representative to schedule my inspection.

Scheduling information must be submitted to REAC within 21 days of the effective task order date, including the date and time agreed upon by the Property Representative. A confirmation letter is sent to the Property Representative 10 days prior to the inspection date. If the inspection cannot be scheduled in time to send the confirmation letter, call the REAC Technical Assistance Center (TAC) and inform them of the problem. If the inspector has made a real attempt (as defined in the contract) to contact the property representative, the TAC will notify the appropriate REAC PIH or MFH Liaison who will work to resolve the problem. The TAC will notify the appropriate Government Technical Representative (GTR) if a schedule variance is required.

12. I cannot complete an inspection because the residents were not notified.

Inspectors must reschedule any inspection in which residents have not been notified, unless receiving permission to proceed with the inspection from REAC. The inspector must contact his/her Help Desk immediately for guidance.